

## ROLE OF THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN THE US POLICY TOWARDS JERUSALEM DILEMMA 1967-2000

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### ABSTRACT

*The study aimed at rooting the relation between Jewish and Christianity to prove the importance and role of the religious element in forming and directing the US policy towards Jerusalem issue. This is in addition to the impact of this element on US community values and beliefs; which genuinely believes that Jewish return to Palestine is the necessary pre-step for the return of the anticipated Jesus (Masseih). Besides, there are many similarities between establishing both the US homeland and Israel since both depends on invading others' lands and evacuating the original people from their land alleging the spiritual right and settling on Promised Land.*

*Pursuing the approaches of successive US administrations, during the research period, the study concluded that USA presidents and their administrations, based on greatly religious beliefs, had prevented the issuance of many international resolutions condemning the Israeli occupation of east Jerusalem and requiring withdrawal. They sought to end UN role in solving Jerusalem issue and leaving power balances to be the main determiner of Palestinian -Israeli negotiations' results concerning Jerusalem future. These balances are unfair as they bias to the American -supported Israeliparty.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Religious Element, US Policy, Jerusalem Issue & Arab – Israeli Conflict*

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### INTRODUCTION

Jerusalem delimit is the center point of the Arab-Israeli struggle; since it is of political, religious, civilizational and historical importance to all conflict parties. East Jerusalem remained a fixed base for both Arab-Palestinian and Israeli approaches.

The issue got more complicated as it exceeded direct conflict parties to international arenas, especially USA since it is the first sponsor of Arab-Israeli peace process. Thus, the study aims at recognizing the real US policy towards Jerusalem case and showing the importance and centralization of the religious element in drawing and directing this policy through discussion of the original relationship between Jewish and Christianity and how it reflects on the formation of the US community culture; and subsequently its impact on the beliefs and concepts of US decision makers and their approaches towards Jerusalem case.

### STUDY PROBLEM

This study arises many questions which require working to answer, including the following:

- What is the role of the religious element in drawing and directing the US policy towards Jerusalem case?

- What is the real relation between Jewish and Christianity? How far does it affect the US community values and culture?
- How far does the religious element affect the formation of US decision maker's beliefs and concepts? How does it reflect on the US actual policy towards Jerusalem case?
- Study hypothesis:
- The study is based upon the following hypothesis:
- The religious element had been playing a central role in forming the US policy and genuinely affecting the concepts and approaches of US decision makers towards Jerusalem issue.

### ***Rooting the Relation Between Jewish and Christianity and Its Impacts on US Community Culture***

Rooting the relation between Jewish and Christianity is genuine in this study to prove the importance and role of religion in directing the US policy towards Jerusalem issue. Hence, the study aims at rooting the religious role and its impact on the values and beliefs formula and the drawing of this policy.

The religious heritage in USA is mainly derived from Protestant doctrine which emerged along with the religion reform led by Martin Luther in the sixteenth century against the Catholic Church in Rome. This doctrine had achieved genuine change in its followers' thinking towards the Jewish as they sympathized with the Jewish and their seeking to accomplish their dream in returning to Palestine four centuries prior to the emergence of the Zionism movement (At Taweel 1995, p. 21).

The theological ideas adopted by Martin Luther had promoted the idea that the Jewish is a preferred nation and emphasized on their return to Palestinian as a pre-step to the return of the anticipated Jesus. (Morris 1977, P. 59) Under the protestant doctrine, internist was increasingly given to the "Old Testament", under the slogan of returning to the holy book since it is the source of the pure creed. Thus the Old Testament formed an important part of protestant doctrine sources and it became the superior reference of behavior and belief. Thus, it was entrenched in the minds of the protestants the idea of the eternal connection between Jewish and Palestine since it is their national home from where they were evacuated and that they should return to it according to the prophecies stated in the Old Testament (Sosa 1972, P. 68)

In 1523, Luther had written a book entitled "Jesus was born Jewish", where he provided a genuine vision rooting the relations between Jewish and Christianity from another perspective totally different from that known by the Christians before. He mentioned that "the holy spirit wished to send the Holy Bible books through the Jewish only. The Jewish are the sons of God and we are the foreign guests" (Helal 2001, P. 63). Thus, the ideas results from the religious reform by martin Luther had paved the way to the same ideas claimed by the Zionist movement in the nineteenth century; through emphasizing on the existence of the Jewish nation and that Palestine is their home and that their return is a theological must to prepare for the Jesus return (Palestinian studies institution 1973, P. 51).

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, religious men appeared in the USA asking for a popular action to return the Jewish to Palestine. The most prominent of which was William Blackstone; who was considered the father of Jewish Zionism due to his constant and extremist activity to achieve the Torah prophecies. In 1878, he wrote a book entitled "Jesus is coming"; where he talked about the Jewish return to Palestine as a pre-step to the return of the anticipated Jesus. Blackstone had pilgrim to the holy lands accompanied by his daughter in 1888. He returned to launch the slogan utilized by the Zionist up

to date: "Palestine was left with national instead of being given to a landless nation – means the Jewish" (Maqar 1992, P. 152)

As for the American fundamental movement, we can say that it began at the beginnings of 20<sup>th</sup> century when a series of books entitled "fundamentals requested that the Christian should accept the holy book as being sent by Allah; thus it is faultless and impeccable" (Blaker 2005, P. 69). Hence, protestant churches membership expanded and widened. This Jewish Christian trend moved to the Middle East and found its supporters in various increasing platforms such as churches, media and even Congress halls. (Al Hassan 1986 – B, P. 121)

### **Religion and Its Role in Forming the US Community Culture**

When European settlement began in America, most new immigrants were Protestants who escaped the religious oppression which overwhelmed Europe then. These new settlers brought with them the religious heritage derived from the Old Testament (Torah); which played a major role in forming America thought since then (Al Nerb, 1997, P. 33). Some comparative studies refer that these settlers had linked their experiences, since they left Europe; especially England, to the old Jewish experiences when they ran from Pharaoh's injustice to Palestine. They considered America (New Jerusalem) and they likened themselves to the old Hebrews who escaped Pharaoh's' tyranny (Al Hassan 1986- B, P. 119)

Thus, they consider themselves like the Jewish who escaped looking for the Promised Land which will provide milk and honey. They fought challenges in their journey across the ocean just like the Jewish in Sinai desert when they went out of Egypt. Besides, they were resisted by the original inhabitants (American Indians) the same as the Jewish were resisted by Palestine inhabitants. While they were declaring war against the original land inhabitants, they recalled the Old Testament as there is similarity between their experiences against the American Indians and the Jewish against the Palestinians in the past (Merkli 2003, P. 105)

These settlers knew that the land they took from its original owners is not theirs; and the oppression, murder and displacement of the original inhabitants are contrary to the simplest moral principles. Thus, they needed an excuse to justify these deeds and give a glimpse of legitimacy even if it is faked. They found this excuse only in the Old Testament. As the old Jewish justified their occupation of Palestine alleging that it is the Promised Land given by Allah to His elite nation, the new settlers did the same by alleging that Allah had chosen the white Protestant Angeluscon to lead the world (Julian 1970, P. 19).

Under the role of religion in forming the American identity, Samuel Huntington had attempted to determine the real American identity through his book entitled: "Who are we? Determination of the American National Identity) He believes that the Americans who declared the America independence from the English colonialism at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, were a coherent group of protestant settlers who came to the new world from Europe, especially England. These settlers planted the seeds of the American community based on their Anglo-protestant principles and culture; without which, as described by Huntington, today's America had no existence. He added that America has determined identity which is the identity of those settlers. It is mainly based on four pillars: White race, ethnic English, protestant Christian religion and protestant English culture (look Huntington, 2009). Thus, the core role of the religious element in the life and culture of the American community is clear since the early years. This motivated some thinkers to describe the American nation as "the only faith-based nation in the world" (Brestofetz, 2003, P. 5) (Makdwal, 2001, P. 41)

### **The Religious Perspective of America and the Zionist Project**

Some researchers in the American history believe that there are many similarities between establishing America and Israel (Abdul Hakim 2005, P. 37) (Al Saqaa 2003, P. 9). The first settlers who came from Europe had borrowed a lot from the Jewish behavior when they exterminated the Kannans, Palestine original inhabitants. Thus, they resemble the American extermination of the Indian Americans to Jewish extermination of the Kannans (Al Saqaa 2003, P.9).

Whereas the American community is most like the Hebrew community, as both were established on invasion of others' land, these invasion and occupation had to be justified based on divine-right allegation, through the introspection of the Promised Land myth and alleging that land extortion is an implementation of the divine will (sahib, 2003, 17<sup>th</sup>February). Hence, based on his religious background, President Wilson (1913-1921) was pushed to achieve the Jewish wishes. He was grown up under the protestant teachings which believe in Torah prophecies. Thus, he sought to have a role in returning the Jewish to palatine. Moreover, he considered the matter as: returning the holy land to its people, and thus he serves Allah's wishes by accomplishing the Zionist project. (Al Sherif 1985, P. 195)

USA had adopted Belfour declaration (2<sup>nd</sup> November 1917) who called to establish a national home for the Jewish in Palestine. It was considered the first great official and practical step in the Zionist project (Al Jarad 2007, P. 44). President Wilson had declared his support to give the Jewish a national home in Palestine, as he stated: "Palestine won't be ready for democracy unless Jewish possess Palestine" (Razok, 1973, P. 407). In August 1918, Wilson had again declared his support to the Zionist project stating: "I think that our allies had decided to put the core stone of the Jewish state in Palestine by complete support of our government and people" (Al Kafry 2003, P. 8).

Wilson successors had been committed to the Zionist approach; expressing their sympathy with the Zionist movement. President Truman consultant, Clifford, had clarified that in his presentation of the US policy towards Palestine issue since the issuance of Belfour Declaration saying: "All USA presidents had emphasized on the essence of this Declaration from Harding to Truman, including College, Hover and Franklin Rozfelt" (Al Desoky 1985, P. 80)

We can say that the decisive turn in the history of the Zionist project was during the reign of President Harry Truman (1945 -1953); who was the most Jewish demands-supporting president. His efforts had greatly contributed to the establishment of Israel. (Abu AL Ros 1998, P. 64) immediately after the IIWW had ended, Truman had coordinated with Britain, being the delegated authority in Palestine, to present Palestine division project to the UN. Thus, USA had all kinds of pressures on some UN countries to vote for this resolution until it was approved by the UN on 29<sup>th</sup> November 1947 under No. 181 (Abul Khaleq, 1985, P. 66) (Himdan 2000, P. 127-129). This was considered a legal excuse under the International Law to establish Israel. By this accomplishment, Truman had got the satisfaction of the Jewish lobby and Christian Zionist groups, especially the protestant who strongly supported establishment of Israel (Abu Al Ros 1998, P. 64).

When Israel state was declared on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1948, Truman was the first president worldwide to recognize it; ten minutes only after the declaration (Al Jarad 2007, P. 46). Besides, he had an important role in protecting the new born Israel through the truce he imposed, via the Security Council, on the Arab countries which armies entered Palestine to for liberation. This enables Israel to rearrange its army and import more soldiers and weapons from abroad by the secret help of America and Britain. (George & Douglas 1994, P. 28) Many sources refer that Truman was a great admirer of Old Testament, in addition to the clear impact of the Jewish culture on his belief and concepts, especially that he consider the

Jewish Talmud his favorite book. Therefore, he was one of the most supporters of the Zionist movement and the historical –Torah excuse of establishing a national home for the Jewish in Palestine (L Tal 1979, P. 203). Hence, implementation of the Zionist dream project became a reality and the Christian-Zionist far wishes became true. Work phase started to complete the God Kingdom establishment dream, where Jesus will return to rule the world from his crown in Jerusalem. All this shall be under the comprehensive American protection and support (Al Desoky 1985, P. 17).

### **Israeli Procedures against Jerusalem and UN Attitudes**

At the end of the British delegation on Palestine, UN General assembly issued its resolution No. 181 dated 29<sup>th</sup> November 1947, known as “Division Resolution”, whereby it was resolved to establish two states in Palestine: Palestine and Israel. The resolution placed Israel under an international special system managed by Guardianship Council affiliated to the UN (Fouda 1969, P. 28-30). However, in its war with the Arab countries in 1948, Israel had stolen the west Jerusalem, while the Arabs kept the East Jerusalem (the old town including the holy places). Thus, Jerusalem was divided into two parties; which is a severe violation of the referred division resolution No. 181. Subsequently, the UN had issued resolution No. 194 on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1948, confirming that Jerusalem should be under special rule independent from Palestine. Then, it issued resolution No. 303 issued on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1949, emphasizing again that Jerusalem should be under permanent international rule as a separate region under the UN Guardianship Council (Saber 2000, P. 41-44)

In June 1967 war, Israel had occupied the East Jerusalem and hence it dominated the whole East Jerusalem. It began immediately to take legal, administrative and physical actions to demolish the Arab Islamic feature of the city and adding the Jewish feature instead. Israeli Knesset had issued, on 25<sup>th</sup> June 1967, regulations which impose Israeli law and management on the east Jerusalem and consider it part of the “historical Israeli land” (Al Rashidi 1998, P. 255). Again, Knesset issued a resolution on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1980, whereby it considers the unified Jerusalem (east and West) an eternal capital of Israel (Al Hoot 2000, P. 55).

In its allegations concerning Jerusalem, Israel depends on what it calls historical right and religious considerations assuming that the holy city is the heart of the Jewish history and the center of the Jewish religion. Some studies refer that the Zionist plan to dominate the whole Jerusalem and adding the Jewish character thereto by changing its Arab and Islamic identity and sights is rooted in the beginnings of the Jewish thinking towards Palestine. Theodor Hartzl, the spiritual founder of Israel, had confirmed in his speeches on Jerusalem centralization in the Zionist movement priorities. In this regard, Hartzl had declared that: “If one day we got Jerusalem and I was still alive and able to do anything, I will remove everything not sacred for the Jewish” (Saber 2000, P. 42)

David Ben Gurion, the first Israeli prime minister, had summarized the issue more intensively saying: “No Jerusalem, No Israel, and No Solomon Temple, No Jerusalem” (Saleh 2003, P. 487). Thus, he set the strategic base to include the whole Jerusalem. After June 1967 war, he confirmed that saying: “We will keep Jerusalem forever despite all the resolutions which shall be issued by the UN. Jerusalem was the capital of Israel for 3000 years and shall remain in the future” (Sharab 2003, P. 98)

Successive Israeli prime ministries had been using Jerusalem issue in their speeches to raise the Jewish religious feelings and to emphasize on its prestige in the Jewish doctrine. This was a complete challenge and negligence of the UN resolutions which called for the nullity and cancellation of all the Israeli resolutions and procedures towards the occupied Jerusalem (Al Fiky 1999, P. 97).

Thus, Israel had continued the annexation and Judaize procedures in Jerusalem as well as changing the city's real geographic and demographic formation. However, these procedures were met by many resolutions by the UN expressing the international legitimacy in this regard. UN had issued resolution No. 2253 dated 4<sup>th</sup> July 1967, and 2254 on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1967 whereby it asked Israel to terminate the arrangement taken to change Jerusalem status. Then, a resolution was issued by Security Council No. 242 in November 1967 asking Israel to withdraw from the Arab occupied lands including Jerusalem. Thereafter, Security Council issued resolution No. 252 on 21<sup>st</sup> May 1968 which stipulated that all administrative and legal procedures as well as all works carried to change the legal status of Jerusalem are considered null. It asked Israel to cancel these actions and not perform any action that may change Jerusalem status (Saber 2000, P. 40-50).

Besides, Security Council had issued resolution No. 478 dated 20<sup>th</sup> August 1980 which stipulated non recognition of the main law issued by the Israeli Knesset concerning Jerusalem union, and making it the unified and eternal capital of Israel. The resolution asked the countries which sent diplomatic delegations to Jerusalem to withdraw the same. Besides, Security Council asserted that the Knesset Law is a violation of the international law (Al Qarai 1997, P. 132). UN continued condemnation all Israeli procedures and practices aiming to change Jerusalem status, with permanent confirmation that East Jerusalem is an occupied land. In this regard, UN had issued resolution on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1997, with majority of 130 votes, and objections of USA and Israel, confirming that East Jerusalem is part of the occupied lands and it is subject to the international law and obligatory provisions thereof. Besides, the resolution had called to stop the settlement process in East Jerusalem (Aljazari, 1991, P. 115-125)

Thus, it is clear that the Israeli procedures in Jerusalem is not legal, as of the occupation itself until the practices and procedures aiming to change the Arab Islamic nature and identity of the holy city to add the Jewish features instead. This is in addition to all the resolutions issued by the UN confirming that East Jerusalem is part of the lands occupied by Israel in 1967 and assuring the necessity of withdrawal there from.

### **Impacts of the Religious Element on US Policy towards Jerusalem**

We can point the actual US policy towards Jerusalem issue through pursuing its political approaches in this regard. USA had been devotedly preventing the issuance of many resolutions condemning Israel in international panels and organizations. Besides, it refrained voting on other resolutions regarding the same. For example, Washington had refrained from voting on the two resolutions No. 2253 and 2254 issued in the urgent round of the UN on 04.07.1967 and 14.07.1967 respectively; which asked Israel to stop any action that may change Jerusalem status and cancel all other executed procedures as deemed void and null. (Al Sahly 2003, P. 82).

Israel victory in June 1967 war had greatly increased the power of the protestant Christian tend supporting Israel. They considered what happened on Palestine land is the accomplishment of Torah prophecies and divine will (Ioran 2003, P. 95). Hence, Nixon's doctrine had emerged which considered that "Israel is the core stone of the US policy in the area and the only sincere agent who can be relied on in emergencies" (Look Arori 2003). Therefore, Nixon was the first American president giving Israel huge financial aid of 3 billion dollars; based on his religious convictions and beliefs and in response to the religious public opinion in USA. This is in addition to the USA strategic goals and interests in the Middle East, within the Cold War conflicts (Al Hor & AL Mousa 1986, P. 121).

Nixon was fundamentalist Anglian, from a religious family. He was impressed by the Torah ideas and prophecies and had intimate relations with some Israel supporting fundamentalists. This was in coherence with his faith that God had

chosen USA to rule the world in constituency with Israel (Bignon 2001, P. 196) (Corbet 2002, P. 55)

Nixon's concepts were manifested through the policies and strategies he adopted. On 9<sup>th</sup> December 1969, his Minister of Foreign Affairs (William Rogers) had declared US administration approach of Jerusalem issue. Washington had asserted that Jerusalem should be unified and to settle this problem through direct negotiations between Arabs and Israel (Riyad 1981, P. 143). This American approach aimed at waiver of the relevant internal legitimacy and put an end to any role of the UN in settling this conflict and let the power balances play the main determiner of negotiations' results concerning Jerusalem fate. However, these balances are severely unfair and support the American-supported Israeli party.

US policy became more bias to Israel through the policy adopted by the American minister of foreign affairs (Henry Kiesinger), of Jewish background. He was one of the greatest defenders of Israel. He opposed all the peaceful projects to settle Arab-Israeli conflict; stating there turn of even a small number of the Palestinian refugees to their homes and adopting the idea of settling them in both Jordan and Syria. Besides, he refused any Israeli withdrawal to prior 1967 borders including east Jerusalem (Reconciliation 1994, P. 203).

As for the US policy during the region of Gemmy Carter (1977-1981), it was as described by his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sairos Fans, saying: "it was not questionable. The core stone of Carter policy towards the Middle east was his commitment of Israel security". (Fans 1984, P. 9) Zabgnio Breginsky, Carter consultant of national security, had confirmed that saying: "the American-Israeli relation is intimate and based on historical and spiritual heritage" (Sultan 1998, P. 51). Carter himself had described the American- Israeli relation during the press conference in 1977 saying: "We have special relation with Israel. It is very important that no one in our country or in the world doubt that our first commitment in the Middle East is to protect Israel eternally and peacefully. It is indeed a special relation." (Rich 1986, P.179) (Abdul Ghafar 1982, P. 245) Moreover, in his speech before the Israelis Knesset in March 1979, He went far beyond saying: "America's relation with Israel is more than special. It had been unique, non-negotiable because it is rooted in the morale, ethics, religion and beliefs of the American people. Besides, both USA and Israel had been established by immigrating leaders; thus we share Torah heritage as well "(Himdan 2000, P. 152)

Carter religious background, being one of the Israel-supporting Baptist Church followers that extremely believe in all prophecies and historical events mentioned in the Old Testament had drawn his policy towards Israel. Therefore, he was very clear expressing the religious factor and its impact on the US policy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict; especially regarding Jerusalem. In his speech in 1978, he said: "Israel is first of all is the return to the Torah land; from which Jewish were expelled hundreds years ago. Establishing the state of Israel is an achievement of the Torah prophecy and essence." (Landau 1995, P. 305) In one of his speeches, he declared before the Jewish conference that: "Nothing shall affect his country's commitment towards Israel and that Jerusalem shall be unified forever." (Qalagi 1992, P. 55)

In light of the same, US had refrained from voting on the Security Council resolution No. 478 issued on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1980; which stipulated that the Israeli major law issued by Knesset concerning Jerusalem is void and null, as previously referred. Thus, the US approach concerning Jerusalem remained the same until the last years of Gemmy carter's reign in complete constituency with the Israeli vision. (Al Asdi, 1995, P. 74-84)

As for President Ronald Regan (1981-1988), he is considered one of the most religious and believers of the Torah prophecies; especially that related to Armageddon. When he entered the US elections, he declared that he felt as if "Jesus took his hand and that he will succeed to won the Armageddon war, which he believes to take place during the current

generation in the Middle East". (Ayoub 1989, P. 167)

Regan's referred onions and beliefs reflect his wide faith in the Torah prophecies and using them to excuse Israel existence. It also reflects how far these Torah prophecies affect US decision makers. Regan had confirmed his absolute faith in connecting religion to politics, and he refused to separate them based on the values on which the American community was established which made America a God-blessed nation. (Jarodi 2002, P. 109)

As a result of Regan's mentioned beliefs, US support to Israel was unprecedented in all levels. US administration had adopted the Israeli visions of Jerusalem. In this regard, Regan had some declarations in various occasions where he considered Jerusalem the capital of Israel and that it should be always under the Israeli sovereignty. Washington had resumed objection to discuss Jerusalem issue in the UN and used veto against any UN resolutions condemning Israel. Sometimes, USA refrained from voting alleging that Jerusalem final status should be resolved via direct bilateral negotiations. (P. 119-115, Peck 1984)

During (1989-1992), George Bush became US President. He is known to be from religious family of close and intimate relations with extremist fundamentalist trend and its figures who literally believe in the Torah prophecies (Al Bana, 2004, P. 111). Bush was proud of this relation and sought always to get close to that trend even when he was Regan vice-president as he was "the religious star in Maik Evans Angelic priest meetings" (Maqaar 1992, P. 368). He was indebted for his election to that extremist Christian party' which enjoys huge institutional power in the Republic party. This trend's followers had supported Bush as they believe that he is the best to express their extremist Israel-supporting opinions. George Bush is the son of fundamentalist trend in America and the executer of all the plans and projects thereof in Palestine. (Halsel 1998, P. 25)

These perspectives and backgrounds had clearly been reflected on Bus administration approaches; USA used Veto in May 1990 to waiver Security Council draft to consider Israeli settlements in the occupied land as illegal. (Al Shati 1997, P. 182-184) In 1991, when Washington intended to hold Madrid conference for settlement negotiations between Arabs and Israel, US administration adopted attitudes of important dimensions and indications towards the issue and fate of Jerusalem. USA adopted Ishaq Shamir's visions, the Israeli prime Minister then, as a base for the settlement process. The most important visions, in this regard, included that Jerusalem is not subject to discussion and he refused the participation of any member from Jerusalem in the Palestine negotiation delegation (Roinberg 1991, P. 278-288). In the same context, Washington had confirmed to the Palestinians that Jerusalem should be unified and its final conditions must be determined through negotiations. (Palestinian studies magazine 1991, P. 286) Hence, USA had neglected all Jerusalem- relevant international resolutions; especially the famous division resolution No. 181 for the year 1947. It left Jerusalem fate and negotiations results to be determined according to the dominant powers balance which give Israel the super power in this regard.

#### **President Bill Clinton (1993-2000)**

Despite being accused of love relationship with Monica Lewinsky, President Bill Clinton was religious and believed in the Bible. He used to go to the church every Sunday with his personal copy of Bible in his hand (Abu Khalil 2003, P. 34). His Christian origins had a great effect on him since his earlier days. This was greatly reflected on him later on in his approach towards Israel. Since his presidency in 1993, the US administration was rich in Jewish figures holding prestigious and influential positions both domestically and abroad. In his reign, US National Security Council consisted of



11 members; seven of which were Jewish. As for the ministers, they were many; the most significant was William Cohen, his defense minister, Madeline Olberit, his Minister of Foreign Affairs and CIA head, George Tenet. This is in addition to tens of famous characters in the White House and US embassies abroad. Besides, the US delegation that was in charge of pursuing Arab-Israeli peace process, most of its members were Jewish such as Denies Ros, Haron Miller and Martin Andik (Saleh, 2003, P. 255)

In his speech before the Israeli Knesset on 27<sup>th</sup> October 1994, Clinton talked with great passion about the holy religious political relation between USA and Israel. He expressed that saying: “while Israel was struggling for survival, we were happy for your victories and sorry for your miseries. In the years following establishment of Israel, the Americans liked you through every religious belief and supported you. Israel existence is not important not only for our benefits, but for all our dear values. You have to realize that you path is ours and America will stand by you now and forever.” (Saleh 2003, P. 255)

Thus, Clinton had emphasized, like his American predecessors, on the deep religious and Torah dimensions of his relation with Israel. These perceptions were clear through his approach towards Jerusalem. Since the beginning, his declarations focused on that Jerusalem final condition shall be determined via final condition negotiations between the Arab and Israeli parties. At the same time, US administration refrained from any action concerning stopping Israeli settlements in Jerusalem except saying that settlements hinder the peace process. Clinton administration continued to hinder any relation issued by the international organization to condemn Israel and its policies in Jerusalem which aim at Judaizing the city and building more settlements; such as Harhoma settlement on Abi Ghonim Mountain in 1996. In this regard, Clinton had confirmed that Jerusalem is one of final condition negotiations’ issues, which should not be discussed by the international organizations. Besides, UN historical concern on these issues is ended. In the same context, Madeline Olberit, Clinton’s minister of foreign affairs, had said that final condition issues became bilateral matter to be discussed between Israel and Palestinian authority. (Al Sahly2003, P. 79-80)

The US approach concerning Jerusalem became more significant in Camp David 2<sup>nd</sup> Summit (12-25.07.2000); through the suggestions submitted by President Clinton, which stated that Pealstinain shall be given supervision and keeping of the temple Mount, while sovereignty shall be for Israel. A Palestinian sovereignty shall be on the external areas of Jerusalem, while a special system shall be applied internally in the way that provides functional powers to the Palestinians under the Israeli sovereignty. In the same context, Madeline Olberit suggested “Abo Des” town to be capital of the Palestinian state, and to be entitled as “Jerusalem”. The brief perceptions show that Clinton administration had adopted the Israeli suggestion and prejudiced the Palestinians’ rights declared by the International legitimacy (Edris 1998, P. 209-210)

President Clinton had practiced all forms of pressure and political blackmail on the Palestinians. When these negotiations failed, Palestinians were the only ones to be blamed. On the other hand, Clinton declared that he shall enhance his strategic relations with Israel to ensure its qualitative excellence. He added: “... I always wanted to move our embassy to Jerusalem and we have special place for it there, yet I did not do that because I didn’t want to take any action that may weaken our aim to accomplish safe, fair and permanent peace for both Israelis and Palestinians. However, in light of the last incidents (failure of Camp David 2<sup>nd</sup> talks), I shall revise the matter and resolve it.... I had always wanted to do that and thought it the right action to be taken.” (<http://www.usinfo.state.gov>)

## CONCLUSIONS

- Religiously framed US-Israeli relation is the axis of US bias to Israel and the continuous occupation of East Jerusalem.
- Religious aspect had been constant in the Israeli supporting US policy. It had been always adopting the Israeli vision of solving Jerusalem issue and its attempt to impose the same on Arabs and Palestinians.
- Religious values and perceptions structure of USA presidents had a genuine role in aiding and supporting Israel politically, militarily and economically in its conflict with the Arabs. Besides, it refused to abide Israel by withdrawal from the occupied East Jerusalem pursuant to the internal legal resolutions in this regard.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The religious aspect has deep roots affecting the US policy towards the Arab-Israeli conflicts, especially Jerusalem which has great religious importance. In the American community culture, Israel is generally considered a divine project similar to Jesus second return idea. Consequently, Israel cannot be criticized or condemned. Thus, the Arab side is required to perform more deep studies on religion and its impact on the US policy towards the Arab issue. This will pave the way for deeper understanding of the US policy determiners and mechanisms and drawing Arab policies capable of dealing with that.
- Though the Israel-supporting fundamentalist Christian party represents the majority in USA, Arab still have opportunities and capacities to affect the American community through conversation and understanding with more moderate categories and authorities that adopt balanced approach towards Arab-Israeli conflict.
- Arab leaders and elite are demanded to establish proper intellectual strategies and platforms to deal effectively with the centralized religious aspect since it is one of the main motives of the US policy. Then, they can impact the cultural and intellectual structure of the American community, and subsequently, US presidency to adopt more moderate policies concerning Arab-Israeli conflicts, in general and Jerusalem, in particular.

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